

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in this application.

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A vacuum cleaner including a suction unit ~~(1)~~ and a flexible hose assembly (2) connected therewith, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the hose assembly (2) includes at least two flexible sections one of which ~~(25)~~ has a smaller external diameter than the other ~~(20)~~ and is slidable within the other, and ~~that wherein~~ the at least two flexible sections are arranged to seal with one another at least when the at least two flexible sections are extended relative to one another.

2. (Currently amended) A vacuum cleaner according to Claim 1, ~~characterised in that wherein~~ the at least two flexible sections ~~(20 and 25)~~ are corrugated.

3. (Currently amended) A vacuum cleaner according to Claim 1 ~~or 2~~, ~~characterised in that wherein~~ the one of said at least two flexible sections having the smaller external diameter section ~~(25)~~ is stretchable from a natural short length to a longer length by applying an axial force.

4. (Currently amended) A vacuum cleaner according to Claim 1 ~~or 2~~, ~~characterised in that~~ the one of said at least two flexible sections having the smaller external diameter section ~~(25)~~ is retractable from a natural extended length to a shorter length.

5. (Currently amended) A vacuum cleaner according to Claim 4, ~~characterised in that wherein~~ the one of said at least two flexible sections having the smaller external diameter section (25) is retractable by suction applied by the suction unit (1) when the end (32) of the hose assembly (2) is occluded.

6. (Currently amended) A vacuum cleaner according to ~~any one of Claims 3 to 5 claim 1, characterised in that~~ the shorter length of the smaller diameter section (25) is substantially equal to ~~the~~ a length of the other of said at least two flexible sections larger diameter section (20).

7. (Currently amended) A vacuum cleaner according to ~~any one of the preceding claims claim 1, characterised in that~~ the at least two flexible sections (20 and 25) of the hose assembly (2) are provided with cooperating couplings (24 and 33) that can be engaged with one another to retain the at least two flexible sections in a compact configuration, one within the other, for storage.

8. (Currently amended) A vacuum cleaner according to ~~any one of the preceding claims claim 1, characterised in that~~ wherein the other of said at least two flexible sections larger diameter section (20) of the hose assembly (2) is stretchable from a natural short length to a longer length by applying an axial force.

9. (Currently amended) A hose assembly (2) for a vacuum cleaner, ~~characterised in that the hose assembly (2) includes~~ comprising inner and outer corrugated, flexible sections (25 ~~and 20~~), wherein:

~~that the inner section (25) has a first end (28) slidably retained within the outer section; (20), that~~

the hose assembly (2) has a short configuration ~~where the~~ in which a major part of the length of the inner section (25) extends within the outer section, (20) ~~and the first end (28) of the inner section (25) extends within the outer section (20) and the first end (28) of the inner section (25) is located adjacent the~~ to a first end (21) of the outer section; (20); and that

the hose assembly (2) has a longer configuration ~~where~~ in which the inner section (25) is extended beyond a second end (24) of the outer section, (20) ~~and the first end (28) of the inner section (25) is located adjacent to the second end (24) of the outer section (20) and in which a seal (29, 30) is provided between the two inner and outer sections (20 and 25).~~

10. (Currently amended) A hose assembly according to Claim 9, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the inner section (25) is ~~extensible~~ extendable from a shorter length substantially equal to ~~the~~ a length of the outer section (20) to a longer length greater than ~~that the length~~ of the outer section.